

NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

India hosts Implementation and Assessment Group Meeting of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT)

- The **Ministry of External Affairs** in coordination with the **Department of Atomic Energy** is hosting the **Implementation and Assessment Group Meeting of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT)** at the Pravasi Bhartiya Kendra, New Delhi.
- India is committed to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and technology and promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and global nuclear non-proliferation.
- GICNT was launched in **2006** jointly by the **Russian Federation** and the **United States**. Presently it has 86 partner nations and five official observer organizations.

Jharkhand CM Raghubar Das launches UJALA scheme

- Jharkhand Chief Minister launched energy efficient fans and LED tube lights under the '**Unnat Jeevan by Affordable LEDs and Appliances for All**' (UJALA) scheme in the state.
- The UJALA scheme is being implemented by **Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL)**, a JV under the administration of Ministry of Power, Government of India.
- In Jharkhand, EESL plans to distribute more than 25 lakh LED tube lights and one lakh energy efficient fans to people on upfront payment.
- It is estimated that over 5.5 lakh consumers will benefit from the scheme.

Gujarat Become India's First State to Establishes Cashless System for PDS

- **Gujarat** has become the first state in India to establish **Cashless system for distribution of food grain** to the beneficiaries under NFSA (National Food Security Act).
- The state government which has installed **Aadhaar Enabled Payment System** in 17,250 **Fair Price Shops (FPS)** much before the target of March 31 as decided by the state.
- The beneficiaries would just need to carry their Aadhaar cards for getting their food grain in Gujarat.
- This will help in establishing their identity, stop the leakages of grain at shop level and eradicate corruption in the Public Distribution System (PDS).
- Besides these, the consumers will also be able to get their rail, air and bus tickets reserved, pay mobile bills, deposit crop insurance premium, LIC premium and even get the Soil Health Card and registration for Centrally Sponsored Schemes at the FPS itself.

Lok Sabha Passes Payment of Wages (Amendment) Bill, 2017

- The **Lok Sabha** passed the **Payment of Wages (Amendment) Bill, 2017** which allows for payment of wages digitally or through cheque directly into the account of workers.
- The Payment of Wages (Amendment) Bill is in line with the government's cash-less economy.

- The Payment of Wages (Amendment) Bill, 2017 seeks to amend the Payment of Wages Act 1936.
- Once the bill is passed by the Rajya Sabha, it will also replace the **Payment of Wages (Amendment) Ordinance 2016** that was promulgated by the President on December 28, 2016.
- The amended bill will also lead to formalization of workforce and provide them social security benefits like provident fund and health insurance.
- The Payment of Wages (Amendment) Bill, 2017 will enable the employers to pay wages via cheque or bank transfer directly into worker's account without the need for worker's written consent for the same.

Commerce Ministry approves Revenue Insurance Scheme for Plantation Crops

- The **Union Ministry of Commerce** under Nirmala Sitharaman has approved the pilot **Revenue Insurance Scheme for Plantation Crops (RISPC)** to protect the growers of plantation crops from the twin risks.
- Firstly the risks of **yield loss** due to adverse weather parameters, pest attacks etc.
- Secondly **income loss** caused by fall in international/domestic prices.
- RISPC will be implemented on a **pilot basis for two years** covering tea, coffee, rubber, cardamom and tobacco in eight districts in West Bengal, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Sikkim and Tamil Nadu by the commodity boards.

Railway Ministry Launches First Phase of the Station Redevelopment Program

- The **Ministry of Railways** launched the first phase of **Station Redevelopment Programme** for commercial development of 23 stations across India.
- The 23 stations in the first phase of redevelopment includes Chennai Central, Ranchi, Udaipur, Indore, Yesvantpur, Bangalore Cantonment, Visakhapatnam, Howrah, Kamakhya, Faridabad, Jammu Tawi, Secunderabad, Vijayawada, Kozhikode and Bhopal.
- Under the Station Redevelopment Programme, the Railway will take up **400 A1 and A stations** for redevelopment through public private partnership (PPP).
- The redeveloped stations will provide amenities like digital signage, escalators, self-ticketing counters, executive lounges, restaurants, malls, theaters and Wi-Fi facility.

HRD Ministry Constitutes Sub-Panel of CABE to Boost Girls' Education

- The Union Ministry of Human Resource Development has constituted a **sub-committee of Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE)** under Chairmanship of Telangana's Deputy Chief Minister to look into issues related to girls' education.
- The sub-committee would be responsible to examine the reasons for low participation of girls in education including the socio-economic factors and suggest ways to reduce gender disparity.

INTERNATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

Dubai Gets first Women Commercial Pilot from Royal Family

- **Shaikha Mozah Al Maktoum**, one of the female members of the ruling family of Dubai, has become the **first woman commercial pilot of Dubai**.
- The announcement was made by her family members on Instagram saying that she was on her first assisted flight as a commercial pilot for Emirates.

BUSINESS AND ECONOMY

Sixth Bi-monthly Monetary Policy Review of RBI for 2016-17

- The **Reserve Bank of India** announced its **sixth bimonthly monetary policy review for 2016-17** and has maintained its status quo with key policy rate unchanged.
- On the basis of an assessment of the current and evolving macroeconomic situation in the country, the **Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)** decided to keep the key rates unchanged.
- RBI has announced that from March 13, 2017, there would be no limit on cash withdrawal.

Federal Bank Inks Pact with Commodity Online for Loans Against Warehouse Receipts

- Private sector lender Federal Bank Limited has partnered with Commodity Online, a leading online data and information portal for the distribution of loans against warehouse receipts and collateral management services across the country.
- The partnership will enable Federal Bank to digitally provide financing for agri-commodities with collateral management across India.
- The farmers and traders with the help of the portal can track commodity markets and warehouses online as per their convenience and eventually get financing for their commodities quickly.

HDFC & Kotak Mahindra Bank Goes Live on Bharat Bill Payment System

- The Private sector lenders **HDFC Bank** started operating its **Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS)** to ease the bill payment service for the customers.
- A customer can pay multiple bills from a single platform without the need of visiting multiple websites or issuing individual cheques, or also registering billers with her bank for standard instructions for debit.
- The service is available in multiple payment modes, online and through a network of agents.

Bank of Baroda & IFFCO Signs Pact to Launch Co-Branded Debit Card

- **IFFCO and Bank of Baroda** have signed an MoU to launch **co-branded debit cards** for farmers in a bid to promote cashless transactions in the rural area.
- Under the MoU, Bank of Baroda will open **Aadhaar-enabled accounts** of farmers and issue co-branded debits card to the specified farmers with overdraft facility of **Rs 2,500 per card**.
- With the help of the card farmers can purchase agri-inputs from the IFFCO and its subsidiary on credit period of one month and at an attractive interest rate.

PEOPLE IN NEWS

SoftBank's COO quits boards of Ola, Snapdeal and Housing

- SoftBank Group's Chief Operating Officer (COO) **Jonathan Bullock** has resigned from the boards of Ola and Snapdeal due to "personal reasons and other obligations".
- He also resigned from the **board of Housing**, citing a regulatory filing.
- oftBank's Managing Director **David Thevenon** is likely to replace Bullock and join the boards of Ola and Snapdeal.

Kings XI Punjab appoint Satish Menon as CEO

- Kings XI Punjab have appointed **Satish Menon** as Chief Executive Officer.
- **Rajeev Khanna** as the Chief Operating Officer of the franchise for the upcoming season IPL.

AWARDS

Hyderabad Surgeon Raghu Ram Honored with B C Roy Award

- Hyderabad based **Dr P Raghu Ram**, President of **Association of Breast Surgeons of India (ABSI)** has been honored with the prestigious **Dr B C Roy National Award** for 'outstanding service in the field of socio medical relief' for the year 2016.
- Dr Ram was honored for his significant contribution towards improving the delivery of breast health care in India and creating the much needed awareness about importance of early detection of breast cancer in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh through a number of initiatives.
- He is the youngest surgeon ever from Telangana and Andhra Pradesh to have been selected for the award.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

ISRO Indigenously Develops Telemetry and Telecommand Processor

- **ISRO** informed that the indigenous development of **Telemetry & Telecommand Processor (TTCP)** has been realised and now with the help of Indian industry its productionisation will be initiated.
- The indigenously developed Processor was successfully deployed in checkout of GSAT-19 which is scheduled to be launched shortly.
- The processor will replace the expensive imported equipment. Its indigenous development was taken up by ISRO as part of '**Make in India**' campaign

Researchers Forms Stable Compound Na₂He of Helium and Sodium

- An international team of researchers from **China, Russia, and the United States** conducted computer modeling to create a thermodynamically stable compound of sodium and the noble gas helium, Na₂He.
- Na₂He has a fluorite-type structure and is stable at high pressures.
- Noble gasses got their name because they were thought not to mix with the other elements and forming no compounds.
- However, with this experiment, the study of chemistry gets a big change in noble gas theory.

SPORTS

Delhi batsman Mohit Ahlawat becomes first to score 300 in T20s

- 21-year-old Mohit Ahlawat became the **first batsman in the world to score a 300** in a T20 match.
- While the match had no official status and was only a local match played in Delhi.